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**ARGYLL AND BUTE COUNCIL**

**OBAN COMMON GOOD FUND**

**LEGAL & REGULATORY SUPPORT**

**21 JUNE 2022**

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**OBAN COMMON GOOD FUND OBSERVER ROLE**

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**1.0 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

The purpose of this report is to provide the Trustees of the Oban Common Good fund with information regarding the role of observers which the previous Trustees had put in place to ensure openness and transparency of decision making, and to seek instruction from the new Trustees as to whether they would like to continue this arrangement.

## **OBAN COMMON GOOD FUND OBSERVER ROLE**

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### **2.0 INTRODUCTION**

- 2.1 The purpose of this report is to invite the Trustees of the Oban Common Good Fund to consider the previous practice of appointing observers to attend meetings of the Oban Common Good Fund and to seek instruction from the newly appointed Trustees regarding the continuation of these roles.

### **3.0 RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 3.1 That the Trustees agree to note the previous arrangement in appointing observers in terms of transparency and openness of decision making, and consider what approach, if any, they may wish to take in terms of widening participation at their future meetings.

### **4.0 DETAIL**

- 4.1 In 2012 the incoming Trustees of the Oban Common Good Fund were keen to look at the operation of the fund and ensure openness and transparency in all of the decision making process. To assist with this they agreed, in November 2012, to invite observers to meetings to ensure greater visibility to the community of the application of fund criteria and distribution guidance when determining applications. This being seen to be beneficial as much of the business transacted by the Fund involves discussion of the financial affairs of third parties and as such most of the business is taken in private.
- 4.2 In terms of appointing observers, the 2012 Trustees agreed to invite a member of Oban Community Council, and one member of the religious community to serve as observers, with the intention that those observers would scrutinise decision making by offering views on the applications received and asking questions of the Trustees and Governance advisor about the application of the Fund criteria.
- 4.3 In 2019 the incoming Trustees again agreed to continue this practice and both Marri Malloy, Chair of Oban Community Council and the Reverend Dugald Cameron were once again re-appointed to fulfil this role with Reverend Cameron stepping down in 2021 due to a relocation to a parish

outwith the area served by the Fund.

- 4.4 Following Reverend Cameron's resignation the religious community were again approached and invited to put forward nominations for the vacancy. Two expressions of interest were received from Reverend Monsignor James MacNeil and the Very Reverend Canon Margi Campbell. The then Trustees agreed that both would be invited to a meeting to discuss various options, including increasing the number of observers. In recognition that there had been some occasions when the religious representative could not attend due to officiating at life events, the Trustees extended an invitation to both representatives to be observers, although the timing of the appointments has meant that they have only been eligible to attend meetings on 3 occasions.
- 4.5 At this first meeting of the Fund since the appointments were made, it would be appropriate that the newly appointed Trustees consider what approach, if any, they may wish to take to widen participation at future meetings.

## **5.0 CONCLUSION**

- 5.1 Since 2012, the practice of having observer roles has been applied to meetings of the Oban Common Good Fund. The former Trustees will be aware that this practice has improved transparency and public awareness of the Fund. However, the involvement of observers, or other means of widening participation in meetings is a matter for the newly appointed Trustees to consider.

## **6.0 IMPLICATIONS**

- 6.1 Policy - None
- 6.2 Financial – None, the positions of observer are voluntary and not subject to remuneration.
- 6.3 Legal - None
- 6.4 HR - None
- 6.5 Fairer Scotland Duty:
  - 6.5.1 Equalities – protected characteristics - None
  - 6.5.2 Socio-economic Duty - None
  - 6.5.3 Islands – None
- 6.6 Climate Change - None
- 6.7 Risk - None
- 6.7 Customer Service - None

### **Executive Director with Responsibility for Legal and Regulatory Support –**

Douglas Hendry

27 June 2022

For further information contact: Melissa Stewart, Governance Officer, 01546 604331